

stretched himself full length and pillowed his head on his kit of traveling necessities. A tiny yellow bird performed acrobatic marvels on a sprig of locust and squeaked insults at the restless intruder. Something stirred the sand at his feet. Bung jumped—these sandy hollows were likely to harbor tarantulas as well as birds. But only a timid, whip-tailed lizard scuttled up the trestle and stood upside down, his pulsing throat indicating the palpitation of his heart.

Scattered among the pebbles on the opposite side of the riverbed were several mounds of charred sticks surrounded by a litter of empty cans and broken bottles. Here and there a cryptic sign, scratched and chalked upon the timbers, indicated the spot where errant hoboes had paused, camped, and inscribed, for the benefit of the trade at large, an estimate of the surrounding country's possibilities for graft.

Bung smiled and closed his single eye. His happiness was perfect. One solid week with positively nothing to do! No one to call him servant, no responsibilities, no regular hours! Seven days of green thoughts in green glades! What was the most good for nothing thing he could do in the circumstances? His mind naturally turned to poetry. There was rather a neat thing his

grandfather had taught him in the days of youth. How did it go?

The philosopher Ng Dong
Learned the languages of snakes and bees and cats.
To these he spoke
With considerable intelligence.
How did he acquire this wisdom?
By application and industry!
The philosopher Ng Dong
Learned—

The contemplation of Ng Dong's exhausting labors caused a drowsy spell to fall upon Bung's brain, even as it had in babyhood. Soon a fine, Celestial snore rose tremulously, then increased to a splendid crescendo like the *leit motif* running through some Symphony of Spring.

HI, Bo! Gee! it's a Chink poundin' his ear! Wake up, ol' hophead!" A large but tattered boot shoved Bung so roughly that he rolled over log fashion down the shady slope on which he lay.

"Hoola! Wassa malla you? Who you? Wha' fo'? You crazy! I crazy! Wassa malla now?" jabbered Bung, scrambling out of Dreamland.

"Aw, key down, Johnny! Quitcher yawpin'! Want

the hull State o' California in on this picnic?" inquired the sleep-breaker, clapping a hamlike hand on Bung's shoulder and forcing him to his knees.

Bung beheld menacing him from above a terror of a man, whose bristling beard, narrow set eyes, and grotesque rags gave him the general appearance of a gorilla that had run away with a scarecrow's clothing. The Santa Clara Valley, during spring and summer, is Universal Headquarters for hoboes; and it was evident that Bung must share the riverbed with one of these.

"Whatcher got in yer sack, Chino?" asked the wandering one, glancing hungrily at the bundle in Bung's handkerchief.

"Me catchee chow," replied Bung rather sulkily.

"What y' packin' yer own peck for?" exclaimed the hobo in a dialect that was as strange as Bung's own. "Lemme see it, Bo!" he commanded, snatching at the bandana.

"Ah, no—I sabe you!" expostulated Bung, while the other man, not denying the implication, began untying the knots. Bung's mind was concentrated on the inside picket of his blouse, where the ten-dollar gold piece the Judge had given him felt as big as a dishpan.

"Well, if dat ain't jest like a Chink!" exclaimed the

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LITTLE SISTER WITH THE BLUE EYES

By GEORGE BARTON

THE ambulance gong rang noisily on the midnight air. The horses clattered wildly up the asphalted driveway, the white coated intern leaped from his seat, and in three minutes the form of an unconscious woman rested on the sloping table in the operating room of the hospital.

"Laudanum poisoning," was the curt verdict of the unsympathetic doctor.

The stomach pump and a half-hour of rough handling revived her. The sister superior, standing nearby, glanced at the physician inquiringly.

"Shall I put her to bed?"

He shook his head. "She must be kept awake until six o'clock. If she goes to sleep before then, she'll wake in another world."

The superior was perplexed. "Every nurse in the house is employed. We might give you Michael, the doorman."

The doctor was skeptical. "He'd be asleep in an hour. She'd die before morning."

The momentary silence was broken by a voice from the corridor. "I'll take the case, Sister."

All eyes turned in the direction of the sound. It came from a little nun who had overheard the conversation. She made an appealing picture standing there framed by the low doorway. The firm red lips were parted in a smile of compassion. The dark blue eyes might have been plucked from the vault of Heaven. The nose was delicate and aristocratic. She was as fair and as rare as a bit of Dresden china.

The superior spoke. "Why, Child, you're off duty for the night! You should have stopped hours ago."

She smiled sweetly. "Someone must look after the poor girl."

The doctor scrutinized the young sister in a meditative way; then he turned to the elder nun. "How long has she been at work?"

"Since the rising hour, four o'clock this morning."

He spoke in his brusque, professional way. "It's out of the question—she couldn't stand the strain."

The superior shrugged her shoulders whimsically. "We can't let the unfortunate creature die."

The little sister spoke with determination, the color flushing her cheeks and forehead. "I won't let her die—I'll take the case!"

AND so it came to pass that she began the long night.

The hospital occupied a city block, and the cross shaped corridors presented an almost interminable length of smoothly polished surface. The only way of keeping the patient awake was by walking her constantly up and down the hallways. The fragile little sister suddenly seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength. She grasped the arm of the girl without any preliminaries and began the weary journey.

They presented a striking contrast, the quiet, self-reliant religieuse, and the weak, despondent woman of the world; the one in subdued, self-effacing attire, the other in a loud, gaudy costume which mocked her misery. The first round was made with difficulty. The patient was in a half-comatose condition. She staggered from side to side, her knees bent beneath her weight; but her guide and monitor went forward resolutely, and presently the victim mechanically accommodated her gait to that of her protector. Once round the corridors, twice, four times, and so on until it was impossible to keep further count.

The time between midnight and one o'clock in the morning was like a day and a night. The minutes were leaden heeled, and the brave little sister was weary and sleepy indeed. As the clock struck one, the sister superior appeared with black coffee. The little nun drank a cup gratefully, and her charge took one with sullen reluctance.

The superior lingered sympathetically. "I'm sorry I let you undertake this task."

A rippling laugh was the answer. "Sister, if you talk that way, you'll make me lazy and selfish."

The other looked grave. "The call bell is at the end



"I Shall Keep on Praying for You."

of the hall. If you wish me, press the button and I'll be with you at once."

"Very well," was the dutiful reply.

The superior left; the walk was resumed.

At the end of the third lap the patient became peevish. "I'm tired; I want rest!" she whined.

She was taken to a window seat in one of the alcoves in the corridor. The patient gave a sigh of relief, and the sister felt rather thankful herself. But her blue eyes watched the worldly one with hawklike eagerness. Presently the girl's tired eyelids closed. The sister shook her vigorously.

"You mustn't go to sleep!"

She started and opened her eyes. A few seconds passed, and she lapsed again. This time her head nodded. Instantly the sister was on her feet and had the girl by the arm.

"Come," she said, "we must walk again!"

This time the querulous one was openly rebellious. "I'm tired and sleepy, and I don't want to walk."

The fragile religieuse leaned over and shouted in her ear, "You must walk!"

She looked up doggedly. "I won't walk!"

The reply came like a bullet from a rifle. "You shall walk!"

She grabbed the sulky one under the armpits and lifted her bodily to the floor. Where the strength came from God only knows. She grasped her by the right arm and marched her in double quick time. In thirty seconds the opposition ceased, and the two women moved along the polished corridor with mechanical precision. At intervals the girl protested feebly and begged to be allowed to sit down; but at such moments the nun showed her strength of mind and body by compelling the erring one to move faster than ever.

Three o'clock tolled. All this time the little nun talked and chatted in an eager effort to arouse her companion. At first this appeared hopeless; but presently her efforts met with success. The more deadly effects of the poison had been thrown off. After that, at intervals, they were able to sit down for a few minutes at a time. But all the while the dark blue eyes of the sister were upon her

patient, and at the first suspicious sign of drowsiness she was up again and resuming that dreadful walking.

AS daylight grew nearer, their respective positions were gradually transferred. The patient became fresher, while the worn-out little nun showed signs of weariness. But her resolution was indomitable. She made every effort to rouse the girl from her dejection. Once, just before morning, they sat on the bench together.

"You'll be all right in an hour or so," said the sister.

"You're very good," was the sulky response; "but I can't thank you."

"I don't want any thanks: I only want you to live."

"But I don't want to live: there's nothing for me to live for."

"If you knew how selfish that sounds, you wouldn't say it."

"Why shouldn't I say it? I've been buffeted from pillar to post; I've been deceived; I've even been beaten. I hate the world; I hate everyone in it—except you."

"I'm sorry for you," said the nun in a voice of infinite tenderness. "What you need is a good cry. Come, rest on my breast and have it out."

But the girl simply stared at the sister in wide-eyed wonder. The world had made her coarse and hard and cynical. "I've forgotten how to cry," she said.

"But you've not forgotten how to pray, I hope. Pray that you may be forgiven for your wicked attempt on your life!"

She laughed mirthlessly. "I had no further use for my life; you've saved it against my will."

"But," persisted the sister, "can't you understand that you have no discretion in the matter? God gave you life, and only God has the right to take it away. The creature cannot assume the functions of the Creator."

"I never thought of that."

"But you're going to look at things differently now."

She shook her head stubbornly. "No, I'm not: it's too late to be different." She gazed at the sister steadily for some moments. Then the words that had been in her mind for a long while burst forth. "Why do you do this for me? Why should a beautiful girl like yourself be a nun? Why do you rise at four o'clock morning after morning and slave for people who are perfect strangers to you?"

The sister smiled that compassionate smile that made her look so heavenly. "The answer is simple: for God's sake. And those we work for are not strangers. They are God's poor and unfortunates."

"I don't understand."

"Of course you don't. The world will never understand, chiefly because the world does not care to understand. It all depends on one's point of view. The world, judging from its practices, believes that pride, lust, gluttony, envy, and sloth are worth all they cost; the persons you cannot understand hope they have chosen the better part in voluntary poverty, chastity, obedience, fasting, and prayer."

The sister's cheeks glowed with enthusiasm, and her dark blue eyes were brighter than the stars that shone so brilliantly in the cold sky. There was not the slightest trace of cant or self-consciousness in her low, sweet voice. The girl, who listened attentively, glanced at her with something akin to reverence, but without appreciation. She nodded her head tolerantly, as one would who assents to the contentions of a persistent child or to an insane person; but that was all. The sister took the hands of the other in her own two soft palms and cried impulsively:

"I hope you'll be sorry for what you've done! Anyhow, I shall keep on praying for you."

"Keep on?"

"Certainly!"

"Do you mean to say that you prayed for me before—"

"Yes, before I ever saw you."

The amazement on the girl's face made the little sister